

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A server based communications system operable to present information in response to requests from clients, said server based communications system comprising:

server means for presenting said information which is customized according to a particular class to which said client belongs to and in a format including hypertext protocol and tagging conventions;

database means for retrieval of data stored on said server based communications system in accordance with stored requirements which define the customization for said particular class, said database means being responsive to said server means; and

processing means for manipulating said server means and said database means in response to said requests from said client, said server means, database means and processor means being mutually responsive to one another.

2. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said server means comprises a Web server which communicates via said hypertext protocol and tagging conventions.

3. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 2, wherein said Web server comprises a Netscape Commerce Server.

4. The sever based communications system in accordance with claim 2, wherein said Web server comprises presentation of HTML documents which market consumer services to said client.

5. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 4, wherein said HTML documents comprise hypertext links which are anchored to data that is dynamically retrieved by said database means in response to said particular class of said client.

6. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 5, wherein said data that is retrieved in response to said particular class of said client comprises HTML documents with content customized in response to said particular class of said client.

7. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 5, wherein said hypertext links are one of an image map of said hypertext links and

a grouping of said hypertext links.

8. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 5, wherein said image map is anchored to HTML documents which are configured dynamically by said database means.

9. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 2, wherein said particular class of client is defined by a particular Web site that referred said client to said server based communications system.

10. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said server means customizes the presented information in one of a co-branded format and a private label format.

11. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 10, wherein said co-branded format comprises web site pages with headers and footers including both the referring Web site brand name and the host web site brand name.

12. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 10, wherein said private label format comprises web site pages with headers and footers including only the referring Web site's brand name.

13. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said server means comprises dynamic tokening means for tracking said particular class with said hypertext tagging conventions and influencing the customization of the information presented to said client.

14. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 13, wherein said dynamic tokening means comprises executable tokening means for dynamically outputting an HTML page which includes substituting in information on the site token of the original source by which said client accessed said server based communications system.

15. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 13, wherein said dynamic tokening means comprises executable track means for recording a Web site entry under a particular site token indicative of the source from which said client entered said server based communications system.

16. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 13, wherein said dynamic tokening comprises a PORT# means for dynamically passing web site information from HTML document to HTML document successively present to said client.

17. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 16, wherein said dynamic tokening comprises IMAGEMAP means for dynamically anchoring image based hypertext links to data stored in said database means in response to said PORT# indicative of said particular class of said client.

18. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said hypertext protocol and tagging conventions comprises HTTP and HTML, respectively.

19. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said database means comprises Oracle database software.

20. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 1, further comprising vendor means providing said server means with HTML

documents supplied by a vendor wherein said vendor has access into said server means for control over said HTML documents supplied by said vendor

21. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 20, wherein said control by said vendor comprises steps of transferring HTML documents pertaining to product data, and receiving from said server encrypted files containing orders.

22. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said information presented to said client is a Web site document affording said client an opportunity to request that said server based communications system provide said client with an e-mail reminder of a future event wherein said client may desire to make a purchase through said server based communications system.

23. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 22, wherein said future purchasing event is based on an event selected from the group consisting of holidays, anniversaries, and birthdays.

24. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said processing means comprises means for operating said server based communications system in an Internet based network environment.

25. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said processing means comprises means for operating said server based communications system in an Intranet based network environment.

26. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 25, wherein said Intranet based network environment comprises an America Online group of clients designated as Digital City.

27. The server based communications system in accordance with claim 26, wherein said server means and said database means cooperate to present information with content which is localized for said America Online group of clients designated as Digital City.

28. A network server for marketing consumer services by dynamically presenting HTML documents that are customized with content indicative of existing

brand name familiarity; said network server comprising:

modem means for receiving input signals to and transmitting output signals from said network server in response to a client having communications access to said network server;

server means for presenting said HTML documents across a network to said client as Web site documents which are customized in response to an identity of a source which referred said client to said network server; said server means being responsive to said modem means;

database means for dynamically configuring data stored in said network server in response to said identity of said source which referred said client; said database means operating in response to said server means; and

processing means for manipulating said modem means, server means and database means to cooperate and present said HTML documents.

29. The network server in accordance with claim 28, wherein said server means comprises hypertext based tools to permit said network server to operate in an Internet based network environment.

30. The network server in accordance with claim 28, wherein said server means

comprises hypertext based tools to permit said network server to operate in an Intranet based network environment.

31. The network server in accordance with claim 30, wherein said Intranet based network environment comprises a plurality of said client belonging to a distinct class and said HTML documents are customized with local content intended for said distinct class.

32. The network server in accordance with claim 31, wherein said distinct class comprises a group of America Online customers designated as Digital City grouped clients.

33. The network server in accordance with claim 28, wherein said server means comprises a Web server software tool configured to present HTML documents which are customized to market consumer services in response to said source which referred said client to said network server.

34. The network server in accordance with claim 33, wherein said server means comprises dynamic tokening means for passing said identity of said source which

referred said client to said network server for dynamically customizing all successive HTML documents anchored to a current one of said HTML documents.

35. The network server in accordance with claim 34, wherein said HTML documents comprise hypertext links which are anchored to further HTML documents that are dynamically customized as needed to present to said client in response to said distinct class of client.

36. The network server in accordance with claim 28, wherein said distinct class of client is based on a referring source selected from the group consisting of an Internet service provider and a Web site.

37. The network server in accordance with claim 28, wherein said server means comprises a Netscape commerce server and said database means comprises an oracle database.

38. The network server in accordance with claim 28, wherein said server means presents HTML documents having content dynamically customized in one of a co-branded and private label format.

39. The network server in accordance with claim 38, wherein said co-branded format comprises said content including said network server's host brand name and a brand name of said identity of said source which referred said client to said network server.

40. The network server in accordance with claim 38, wherein said private label format comprises said content being fully customized with brand name and navigation feature requirements set forth by said source which referred said client to said network server.

41. The network server in accordance with claim 28, wherein said server means comprises dynamic tokening means for passing said identity of said source which referred said client to said network server for dynamically customizing as needed said HTML documents presented to said client through hypertext links on any one of said HTML documents.

42. The network server in accordance with claim 41, wherein said hypertext links are grouped as an image map which is anchored to HTML documents that are dynamically created as needed in a customized format that complies with requirements set forth by said source which referred said client to said network

server.

43. The network server in accordance with claim 41, wherein said dynamic tokening means comprises an executable tokening means for dynamically outputting, without any input from said client, one of said HTML documents which includes a site token indicative of said identity of said source which referred said client to said network server.

44. The network server in accordance with claim 41, wherein said dynamic tokening means comprises an executable track means for recording an access to said network server from said source referring said client to said network server.

45. The network server in accordance with claim 28, wherein said server means comprises vendor means for presenting to said client vendor based HTML documents dynamically customized in response to said source to allow said client to make purchases and track said source referring said client through any purchases.

46. In a method for marketing consumer services via client/server based network communications wherein a client is presented by a server with documents which contain HTML tags anchored to other HTML documents, the improvement therewith comprising the steps of:

passing dynamically through said HTML tags the identity of a source which refers said client to said server for presentation of said documents containing said HTML tags; and

customizing dynamically the content of all said documents presented to said client through said HTML tags in response to the identity of said source.

47. The method in accordance with claim 46, wherein said step of passing dynamically comprises a PORT# indicative of said source which is an HTML extension that is embedded within said HTML documents that said server accesses.

48. The method in accordance with claim 47, wherein said step of passing dynamically comprises calling a tokening executable which searches for said PORT#, and when found substitutes said PORT# with a call to said tokening executable with said PORT# passed as a parameter.

49. The method in accordance with claim 47, wherein said step of passing dynamically comprises calling a tracking executable which records an entry onto one of aid HTML documents.

50. The method in accordance with claim 46, wherein said HTML tags are configured as an image map grouping of said HTML tags which are anchored to said other HTML documents which are created dynamically in response to said source when a particular one of said HTML tags is executed as a hypertext transfer.

51. The method in accordance with claim 46, wherein said step of customizing comprises the step of providing co-branded content on said documents with labeling indicative of both a brand name of said source which refers said client to said server and a brand name of a host of said server.

52. The method in accordance with claim 51, wherein said co-branded content comprises headers and footers placed on said documents presented to said server.

53. The method in accordance with claim 46, wherein said step of customizing comprises private labeled content on said documents with labeling indicative only of said source which refers said client to said server.

54. The method in accordance with claim 53, wherein said private labeled content on said documents comprises headers and footers indicative only of said source which refers said client to said server.

55. The method in accordance with claim 46, wherein said step of customizing dynamically comprises configuring content on said documents in accord with requirements set forth by said source which refers said client to said server.

56. The method in accordance with claim 46, wherein said step of customizing dynamically comprises presenting an e-mail reminder HTML document permitting said server to subsequently send a reminder e-mail message to said client.

57. The method in accordance with claim 56, wherein said e-mail reminder HTML document permits event driven reminders selected from the group consisting of holidays, anniversaries, birthdays and a personal event date selected

by said client.

58. The method in accordance with claim 46, further comprising the step accepting into said server HTML documents supplied by a vendor wherein said vendor has control over said HTML documents supplied by said vendor.

59. The method in accordance with claim 58, wherein said control by said vendor comprises steps of transferring HTML documents pertaining to product data, and receiving from said server encrypted files containing orders.